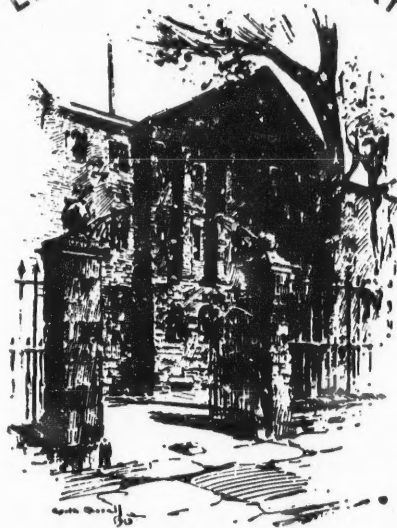


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PROVINCE HOUSE

ON THE TRANSFIGURATION;

A SERMON,

Delivered on the 6th March, 1864, in the Old Presbyterian
Church, South Cornwallis.

ON THE OCCASION OF THE DISSEMINATION OF

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

BY

THE REV. WILLIAM FORLONG,
Minister of the Congregation.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THE CONGREGATION.

HALIFAX, N.S.
JAMES BARNES, 142 HOLLIS STREET.
1864.

Presented to,
C. C. Harrington M.D.
with the compliments of the
Author of the Preface.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

SOUTH CORNWALLIS, March 16th 1864.

Rev. and Dear Sir,

As many friends in your Congregation have expressed to me an earnest desire that you would publish the discourse on the Transfiguration, preached by you on the late Sacramental occasion in the old Church, Cornwallis, I beg to be regarded now as their organ in asking this favour, and in the full hope that you will accede to our wishes in this matter, I would avail myself of this opportunity, not to make any remarks upon your excellent Sermon, which, as we are well aware, was just one of your *ordinary* preparations for the Pulpit,—but of offering a few observations upon the history of the Church of which you are now the Pastor.

The District of Cornwallis, besides its many natural beauties and advantages, has long enjoyed a faithfully preached Gospel—a privilege, we fear, that is not sufficiently appreciated in our day. I think I may still say that our people love the manly old Scotch Theology when fervently proclaimed—that theology which most abases the sinner and exalts the free sovereign grace of God in salvation. Many persons may not be aware that the old Church in which we still worship, owes its origin and existence to the piety of the "Pilgrim Fathers, who were driven by high-handed tyranny to seek freedom of conscience and liberty of worship in foreign lands, and who arrived by the schooner "Mayflower," and landed on Plymouth Rock, A.D. 1620." It appears from the town records of Lebanon, that their immediate descendants came to Cornwallis in 1760 or 1762. Immediately upon their arrival—following the worthy example of their fathers who founded Churches in New England—they, with most commendable zeal, set about the erection of a "House" (to use their own language) "for the worship of Almighty God." Our Church edifice is, therefore, a Puritan erection—and about one hundred years old—the oldest indeed within the Township. On completion of the building, the congregation followed the practice which was generally adopted in those days of selecting a minister, when the people were partly Presbyterian and partly Congregationalist; in which case they chose a Pastor belonging to the larger body. The first minister of the Church in Cornwallis therefore, was the Rev. Mr. Phelps, Congregationalist. He remained in the country but a short time, and was succeeded by the Rev. Hugh Graham, a Secession minister from Scotland. He commenced his labours here in 1785. In 1799 he received a call from Stewiacke, and removed to that place, and continued to labour there with much acceptance to the period of his death, which event occurred in the year 1829. Mr. Graham was followed by the Rev. Wm. Forsyth, a lycentiate of the Church of Scotland, and who was ordained in the United States. His ministry in Cornwallis extended over a period of

about thirty-six years. He died, A.D., 1840. A few years previous to his death he was succeeded by his son-in-law, the Rev. George Struthers. He, and the Rev. Mr. Morrison, late of Bermuda, were the first Missionaries sent out by the Lay Association of the Church of Scotland. They arrived in this country in the year 1827. Mr. Morrison proceeded to Dartmouth, N.S., and Mr. Struthers to Horton. A few years previous to Mr. Forsyth's death, Mr. S. went to Demarara; but, receiving an invitation from the Congregation in Cornwallis, he returned to this country and ministered here until his death, which occurred on the 19th March, 1857. The mortal remains both of Mr. S. and of his predecessor lie buried in our old church yard, and their ashes mingle with the dust of our forefathers, who for nearly a century past have worshiped in the edifice erected by the original Puritans.

The aspect of Presbyterianism in Cornwallis is upon the whole encouraging. There are now four Presbyterian ministers having settled charges within the Township—three belonging to our own Synod, and one to the Reformed Presbyterian body. Our adherents in this county have made praise-worthy efforts in the way of Church building, as well as for the support of the Gospel both at home and abroad. Within a period of seven or eight years, three handsome Church edifices have been built—at Kentville, Canard, and Lakeville—which are now nearly free of debt; and the one at Waterville has been finished and comfortably seated.

Although our number in Cornwallis is yet small, we have reason to feel thankful at the progress which has been already made; and we trust and pray that a rich blessing may accompany the preaching of the Gospel by the Lord's Ministering Servants, and that you, our Pastor, may be long spared to break among us the Bread of Eternal Life is the fervent wish of your attached Congregation.

I remain, &c.,

JOHN S. NEWCOMB.

To the Rev. Wm. Forlong.

[REPLY.]

CORNWALLIS, March 18, 1864.

Dear Sir,

I have acceded to your request that I should publish my Sermon on the Transfiguration. I have done so however somewhat reluctantly, as I had not the remotest idea of exhibiting it in print when I composed it. You must not be disappointed therefore, if when on reading it, you do not find it a *finished* production; and I hope general readers also will bear this in mind, and think less of the composition than of the Divine truths it inculcates.

I remain, Dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,

WILLIAM FORLONG.

Mr. John Newcomb, Elder.

ON THE TRANSFIGURATION.

A SERMON.

"And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter, and John, and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And, as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening, &c.—
LUKE ix. 28-36.

THE SCENE which in these verses is presented to our notice is undoubtedly a remarkably glorious one, and fitted to teach us many great and important truths—not only with respect to the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ—but also with respect to the present condition of those who have in different ages died in the faith of Jesus. We have three several accounts of it by three evangelists, and moreover their accounts are confirmed by the Apostle Peter himself, who was one of the eye-witnesses of it, in his second epistle, in the words: "We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his Majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, and this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount." It is not certainly known to what holy mount the apostle alludes, but ancient tradition makes it the eastern side of Mount Tabor, because we are told that *eight* days before Christ was at Casarea Philippi, which was about twenty-five leagues distant, Matt. (xvii. 1.) and Mark (ix. 2,) call it "a high mountain", and Tabor is only about a mile in height, although the Jewish historian reckoned it

about four miles. If this was the mount, Josephus was probably deceived by its conical form, and by its lonely situation in the great plain of Esdraelon. We may however state that the learned are not now of opinion that the event took place on Mount Tabor, but on some high mountain nearer to Cæsarea Philippi. We may notice, in passing, that there appears to be a slight difference between Luke and the other evangelists about the time when Christ went to this mountain. He calls it *eight* days, and they only *six* days, after Christ had been preaching in Cæsarea. But the difference is not a real one, as he only calculates the time inclusively, or reckons the day on which Christ last preached in Cæsarea and the day of the transfiguration, a mode of reckoning common in Scripture. The apparent discrepancy only shows more clearly the correctness of the inspired writers. But passing from these minor matters, let us now in dependence on the Divine blessing consider :

- I. The sublime event itself, with the Divine testimony borne to Christ.*
- II. The appearance of Moses and Elias, and the theme on which they conversed with Christ.*
- III. Some of the practical lessons which the whole furnishes.*

I.

THE SUBLIME EVENT ITSELF, WITH THE DIVINE TESTIMONY BORNE TO CHRIST.

As Christ was praying, we read that he was transfigured before his disciples. Not merely did a Divine glory shine round about him, but He himself appeared as a fountain of light, sending forth an effulgence of glory. He seemed as if he had suddenly thrown away his tabernacle of flesh and blood, and put on a glorified body, whose beauty and majesty were too dazzling for mortal eye. "The fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening," literally "*flashing as lightning*." Matthew says : "his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light." Mark says : "his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth can white them."

These accounts show us that the Person of Christ had indeed undergone a very remarkable and glorious change. It was nothing extraordinary to see the glory of Heaven surrounding Moses and Elias, but to see the humble, despised, persecuted Jesus of Nazareth who had not yet left this world of sin and suffering, to see him exhibited in such glory and majesty was indeed astonishing. He had wrought many mighty works upon the bodies of others, but never until now had His own personal appearance undergone any change ; and we can readily imagine the overwhelming effect which

it must have produced upon the minds of the disciples, from the account which we have of Daniel's experience when he saw a very similar vision. We read in the tenth chapter of his prophecy, at the fifth verse, &c. : "Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz. His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of *lightning*, and his eyes like lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude. And I Daniel alone saw the vision : for the men that were with me saw not the vision ; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. Therefore I was left alone and saw this great vision, and there remained no more strength in me ; for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength. Yet heard I the voice of his words, then was I in a *deep sleep* on my face, and my face toward the ground." This was evidently a vision of Christ which the Prophet had ; for the description is almost precisely the same as the one we have of him as the glorified Saviour, in the 1st chapter of the Revelation, and the effect of it upon the Prophet is very similar to that which it produced upon John. Now we may justly suppose that the vision of the glory of Christ with which the disciples were at this time favored had a powerful effect, not only upon their mental but also upon their bodily powers. Does Daniel retain no strength and fall into a deep sleep ? Does John sink down upon the ground as one dead ? How probable is it that the disciples also should be rendered powerless, and be "oppressed with sleep." It is thus we would explain the incident mentioned by Luke only, and very briefly, that the disciples "were heavy (or overpowered) with sleep, and when they were *fully* awake (as the word signifies) they saw his glory." The narrative does not say that they were *really* asleep, nor does it tell us of the cause producing the desire to sleep. It might have been merely a natural one, for we may judge from what is said in verse 37th, that the vision occurred during the night, but looking at the passage in the light of the other two, we incline to the opinion that it was a supernatural effect produced by the glory of the vision, which we find from Mark had produced a great fear in them *before* they heard the voice of God out of the bright cloud.

In their great weakness and terror we read "there came a bright cloud and overshadowed them." This was plainly a great mercy to them, as it hid the vision from them ; but it produced, we are informed, a new sense of terror, for in it they heard the voice of God. When they heard this voice, we read in the narrative by Matthew, "they fell on their face, and were sore afraid." They were not however, so entirely prostrated as not

to know what the voice of God uttered, for they heard Him say, "this is my beloved Son, hear Him;" or as Matthew reports it: "this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him." Now when we consider the impression which the vision of the glory of Christ must have already made upon their minds respecting his Divinity, we must conclude that this testimony which the Father bore to Christ would greatly confirm their faith in him as the Son of God. With this testimony from Heaven, they could not but view Christ as giving them in his transfiguration, a gracious manifestation of His own essential glory as a Divine Person, in order that they might be led to entertain more spiritual and exalted views of the kingdom which he was about to set up on earth, and which is emphatically called "the Kingdom of God." The glory and majesty of Christ's appearance, and the voice of the Father instructing them to give all glory to Christ as his Beloved Son, was quite sufficient to teach them that Christ had advanced no unwarrantable claim, when he made himself *equal* to God by calling him his Father—that he was truly by nature the Son of God, and had come for purely spiritual ends. But the glimpse of Christ's Divine glory now afforded must not lead us to imagine that his appearance was exactly such as he now wears in heaven, or such as he shall wear when he comes the second time as the great "Judge of the quick and the dead," for allowing that he appeared as possessed of the "form of God," that is, as partaking of the Divine nature, or as being the eternal "Word that was with God, and was God," "the express image of the Father's person,"—allowing this, yet while his essential Godhead was made visible, it was only in a way adapted to our present condition. John, one of the witnesses of Christ's glory on this occasion, and who says in his 1st epistle that he had seen Christ's glory as "the Word of eternal life," yet lets us know that he will not be seen by us "*as he is*" until we are "*like him*,"—a condition in which the disciples were not either at this time, or during their lifetime; therefore we are to conclude that Christ's appearance on the Mount was no more than a bright prelude of what he will appear hereafter, a striking exhibition of his Divine glory as the exalted Prophet, Priest, and King of Israel.

But the spiritual truth illustrated by the sublime vision of Christ here recorded will appear with greater distinctness, if we view the scene in the light of the Old Testament dispensation. Let us suppose ourselves Jews, waiting on the Temple service. There the typical lamb of atonement was offered—there the blood was carried on the great day of the Passover into the holy of Holies by the High Priest—there God made known his gracious presence as Israel's covenant God, in the appearance of the Shekinah, or cloud of glory, over the mercy seat, under which was the Ark

of the Covenant, the visible pledge that God had made the Temple his peculiar habitation. We are there, but where is the token of Jehovah's presence? Alas! why does the Temple now seem deserted by its Great Possessor? Why look we in vain for the appearance of the Glory? Why if we would find it, must we go to a distant mountain of Galilee, and see it encircling One who belongs to the tribe of Judah, of which Moses spake nothing concerning the priesthood, and one, moreover, who is offering no atoning sacrifice? Why is all this, we ask in wonder? We search the Scriptures anew, and find that this is the exact time predicted when "Messiah the Prince" should appear to take away sin; and we can arrive at no other conclusion than that "this is *He* of whom Moses and the Prophets did write." Such is plainly the instruction contained in the simple fact, that the visible presence of God is now resting on "the Man Christ Jesus." It teaches us to regard Him as God's appointed mercy-seat, and also as his true High Priest to offer up the real atonement for sin. But further. Do we enjoy the special privilege of beholding His glory on the Mount? Do we see Him as the great object of Divine love, with His face shining as the sun in its strength, and with an effulgence of glory upon all his garments? Do we see Moses and Elias as two great representatives of the Church triumphant waiting upon Him? Above all, do we, while prostrate in the dust under a sense of God's immediate presence, hear Him audibly pointing us to Jesus as his beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased? Do we see and hear all this? Then to what other possible conclusion can we come, than that Jesus is the great and glorious Redeemer that was promised, the great Antitype prefigured by all the hosts of Prophets and Priests, in a word, God's eternal and only begotten Son whom He hath sent into the world "in the likeness of sinful flesh," according to the ancient prophecy: "unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

But while, to a thoughtful Jewish mind, the transfiguration of Christ, and the Father's testimony from "the excellent glory," might well lead to the conclusion that Jesus was a Divine Person, and the true High Priest that should offer upon the lofty Altar of his Divinity the real sacrifice for sin, the vision spoke yet more clearly upon these points by giving a glimpse of Moses and Elias, and by letting us know the grand subject of their conversation with Christ on this important occasion. Let us therefore briefly consider,

II.

THE APPEARANCE OF MOSES AND ELIAS, AND THE THEME ON WHICH THEY CONVERSED WITH THE GLORIFIED JESUS.

These two men, we are told, appeared to the disciples "in glory." We are also told that they talked with Jesus only, and that their single subject was, "his decease (literally exodus or departure) which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." Now, had Jesus Christ been *merely* a good man who was to die a martyr's death, and furnish the world by his resurrection *only* with a proof of the soul's immortality, as is sometimes represented, we cannot see any good reason for Moses and Elias being sent from glory to converse with him upon the subject of his death. This was an event common to all mankind, and certainly Jesus could no more require comfort from glorified men than other good men that had died before him.—But if He did, we cannot see any propriety in Moses and Elias being specially selected to give it, for neither of them had suffered martyrdom, nay, one of them had not even tasted death. On the supposition, then, that Jesus was *only* a good man, we cannot see any valid reason why he should receive a visit from Moses and Elias; nay, such a peculiar favor would lead us to conclude that his faith was not so eminent as that of any of the martyrs, and that he was unworthy even of the high privilege conferred upon Elias of not passing through the sufferings of death,—an idea utterly inconsistent with the Divine honour which was now conferred upon him. But let us humbly receive the doctrine of Scripture, that Jesus Christ was the Divine Redeemer, in the faith of whose atonement, believers had in all ages lived and died; that He was the Father's eternal and only begotten Son whose servants only the Prophets were, when, illuminated by his Holy Spirit, they foretold his advent, "his sufferings, and the glory which should follow." Let us view Him as the grand foundation of all their hopes, and the lofty source of all that strength whereby they were enabled to brave the bitterest persecution, and the most cruel deaths; in a word, let us look at Jesus Christ as the great and only Mediator between God and our sinful world from the beginning, with whose suretyship the Father was well pleased when He called him to be his servant, and gave him many "many sons" to redeem and to bring to glory; let us look at Christ's transfiguration in this light, and then not only does the glory of Christ upon this occasion, and the voice of the Father testifying of him as his "Beloved Son," and calling on the disciples to "hear Him," become full of meaning; but the death of Christ, on which Moses and Elias conversed with him, becomes a subject invested with importance infinitely above all others, even as it was by it that the eternal covenant was to be really sealed, through the mercy of which believers obtained salvation be-

fore Christ came, even as they do now after his coming. On what more vital subject, then, could Moses and Elias more properly converse with Jesus? To it they owed entirely their own eternal felicity; hence Paul affirms that the redeemed in glory, as they only obtained salvation through faith in a Saviour to come, whom they laid hold of in a promise,—so, they were “not made perfect without us” to whom He has come.

But we must view Moses and Elias as sent by God, not to speak as private individuals, but to instruct the disciples respecting the nature of their faith when upon earth, and whilst executing the commissions which they had received. They come before *us* then to testify solemnly that Christ is the Messiah whose salvation they proclaimed on earth; and moreover, we must view them as unitedly testifying to the truth of all the Law and the Prophets, that is, in Jewish phraseology, of all the Old Testament. Moses the Lawgiver here, then, tells us the true meaning and design of all the legal ceremonies, and that all the Priesthood pointed to Christ; while Elias, than whom Christ declares a greater Prophet did not arise, stands as the chosen representative of all the Prophets and thus shews that Christ's salvation is the grand theme of them all.

When, then, we contemplate the presence and the discourse of Moses and Elias in glory on the Mount, in its proper Scripture light, we have indubitable evidence not only of the immortality of the soul, and of the resurrection of the body of believers in the image of Christ's glorified body, but of the important truth that salvation has been proclaimed in all ages by grace through faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and only Redeemer. For here, in the persons of Moses and Elias, we have the whole of the old Testament church, with all its array of ceremonies, Priests and Prophets, coming forward before the disciples as the chosen representatives of the New Testament church to declare that Christ was the grand object to which they all pointed, that they were all but the shadows of which Christ is the substance, and therefore that they were now destined to vanish away forever as the mists of morning when the sun arises in his glory. How ought we then to adore the Divine Wisdom and mercy, in sending two such eminent individuals as Moses and Elias to point the Christian church to Christ as the true Messiah, who was come “in the fulness of time” to fulfil all that they and others had declared concerning him ages before. Their testimony is very precious, for in testifying to this truth they not only confirm our faith in *it*, but virtually in the *inspiration* of the whole of the Old Testament canon, a circumstance which ought not to be overlooked, especially in our day, when infidel writers in high places even in the ecclesiastical world are assailing not only its verbal inspiration, but even its historical accuracy, and thus doing their utmost to sap the foundations of

our faith. But, passing from this, we conclude this part of our subject by observing, that we must not suppose that the disciples when on the Mount saw all the *spiritual* glory of the vision of which we have now spoken. To suppose this would be to fall into a great mistake. Their faith we must remember was yet under a cloud, and the time had not yet arrived when the glory of Christ as the Foundation and Head of his Church from the beginning, "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," should arise upon their minds in all its meridian splendour. No! "The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Christ was not yet glorified." They beheld Christ's glory, but they understood not the vision. Hence we read that Peter spoke as one that "knew not what he said," when he proposed to Jesus, as he saw Moses and Elias about to depart, to build tabernacles for the three, saying: "Master, it is good for us to be here, and let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias." When afterwards the vision spoke to the mind of this apostle and the other disciples with power and distinctness, how it would confirm their faith in Christ's Divinity, and in the grand design of the decease which he accomplished at Jerusalem.

III.

LET US NOW CONSIDER SOME OF THE PRACTICAL LESSONS WHICH THE WHOLE SUBJECT FURNISHES.

1. We ought to be confirmed by it in the vitally important truth of the essential Godhead of Christ as the Son.

If this had not been the testimony of all Scripture, we admit that the visible glory of His Person on the mount would not have sanctioned our belief in such a wonderful truth. But with the plain and reiterated teaching of Scripture to this effect, the glory in which Christ appeared cannot but be admitted by us as expressly designed to confirm our faith in Him as a Divine Person, even as "God manifest in the flesh." To bring before us the infinite perfections of God, especially his omniscience and infinite purity, Scripture describes God as "Light in whom is no darkness at all;" or as "covering Himself with light as with a garment." Now observe, that in most perfect harmony with this representation, the prophet Malachi foretells Christ's advent as "the Sun of righteousness that should arise with healing in his wings;" and Christ himself declares: "I am the light of the world, and he that believeth in me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." John asserts that Christ was "the true Light" that made the World, yea all things, and by whom only the Father was declared." Paul also, while declaring that Christ is the Creator of all things, calls him "the image of the invisible God," the "brightness"

(*radiation or effulgence*) "of the Father's glory and the express (or *exact*) image of his Person (or *Substance*)."
 Now with these plain testimonies before us, we must affirm that Christ's appearing on the mount in an effulgence of glory as the Sun shining in its strength, is just such an appearance as we should have expected if he meant to assure us of his true Divinity. But Christ's appearance on the Mount furnishes us with more than a mere conjecture that he was the eternal Son. For when we compare it closely with the second vision which John had of him as the exalted and glorified Redeemer, and listen to the lofty language in which the Lord Jesus addresses John on that occasion, we ought to have a full conviction that it was the Divine Majesty of Christ as the Son that was exhibited to the disciples. Let us read the account: "and I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks. And in the midst of the seven candlesticks, one like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle (the sign of office). His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass as if they burned in a furnace (the symbol of strength); and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." If this is a vision which represents Christ as "the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," the name by which he announces his presence to John, then *certainly* it is one in which he is exhibiting his Divine glory. We therefore conclude that the transfiguration of Christ was a real manifestation of His Godhead. Let us therefore endeavour to lift to Christ the eye of faith, saying to him as Thomas of old: "My Lord and my God;" or as Peter: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." If Brethren you have this faith, you will behold a loftier glory in the Person of Christ than the disciples saw on the Mount. You will see Him as now *present* as your Prophet, Priest and King, according to His promise: "where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." By this divine faith you will have fellowship with the Father, so that you may say from a more blessed experience than that of Peter, "It is good for us to be here." O glorious faith, that brings an invisible Christ in all his Divine glory into the soul, to fill it with Heaven's own joy! O glorious faith that makes the church militant one body with the church triumphant, by uniting us to Christ our mystical Head! Cultivate this faith, believers. Endeavour to realize your union to the Person of Christ. "Without Him," or apart from Him, he declares "you can do nothing." As by faith in Him we *have* eternal life, so by the exercise of this faith we *grow*

in spiritual strength, and in a holy meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light.

2. Let us learn from the Father's voice and testimony on this occasion, that there is a distinction of Persons in the Godhead. A plurality of Persons in the Godhead is a truth advanced in the very first page of the Bible, but it is only gradually that the sublime truth of a Trinity in unity is made to dawn upon our minds. It is only precepted to us fully in the New Testament after Christ had risen from the dead, even after that event which "declared him to be the Son of God with power," or (*powerfully*.) That the Father is a Divine Person distinct from the Son, is plainly seen in this voice "from the excellent glory," and in such announcements as these, that the *Father sent* the Son into the world—that He gave Him up unto death—that He spared not his own and only Son. The doctrine of a Trinity in unity is indeed a great and an adorable mystery, and we must beware of profanely lifting the veil which Jehovah has thrown around the lofty subject of His subsistence in the Three Persons of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Their distinct actings in the plan of redemption is revealed, and *this* is what we have to consider. On this our faith must be exercised, and blessed is he that hears the voice of the Son of God. By this we rise from the grave of trespasses and sins, and have the Spirit of the Son sent forth into our hearts teaching us to cry "Abba, Father," by which we know that we are the sons of God.

3. Let us learn from this passage the entirely voluntary character of all Christ's sufferings and of his death on Calvary. Did the glory and majesty in which Christ here appeared to his amazed disciples prove that he was "God manifest in the flesh" then it no less evinces that whatever he endured of sorrow, misery, and pain, in his Humanity, was endured out of the freest love. Men evidently could have had no power whatever to inflict on him a moment's pain, far less to rob him of life, had he not been most freely pleased to permit them to do whatever their malice and cruelty prompted them to do—and we think that the abundant exhibition of his Divine power which his miracles furnished must have convinced his disciples of this fact, although they could not at that time account for it. And with respect to God, nothing can be plainer than that Christ could be under no obligation to endure the fearful wrath due to transgressors of his own holy law. All his "obedience" unto death was, therefore a perfect free-will offering to God's justice in the room and stead of others, even of all that believe in him. And this blessed truth must have appeared in the most convincing light, when he by his own Divine power raised himself from the dead as he had predicted. The purely voluntary and vicarious character of all that he endured, up to the moment when he

suffered that fearful horror of darkness which made him cry aloud "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" is what made it a righteous thing in God to take full satisfaction for sin upon him, as he really did; and it is this consideration also which makes his whole sufferings and sacrifice a subject full of the sweetest comfort to every broken-hearted believer. Behold then, believers, "the Lord of glory" freely crucified for you, loving you and freely giving himself for you. Behold your hell-deserving iniquities all laid upon the head of God's beloved Son, as your willing Surety; behold him paying your whole mighty debt of obedience and punishment, by giving himself a sacrifice for your sins; and then think whether his sufferings and death ought not to form a subject of frequent and penitential meditation! Moses and Elias, as we have seen, were delighted to talk to Him of His wondrous love in consenting to die for us vile sinners; and if they came from glory to do this; if they left for a season the realms of unspeakable joy to hold converse with Jesus on His love in dying for guilty men,—O how ought His love to attract our hearts, and His death to be meditated upon by us! O reflect, then, frequently upon his dying love. This duty, rightly engaged in, will give a more fatal blow to the love of sin and of the world in you than anything else. It will bring Christ more sensibly nearer to you, and make you long to be with him, and to *see him as he is*. Such was the rapturous feeling of Paul when he wrote to the Phillipian church that he "had a desire to depart, and to be with Christ."

4. We are taught by this passage, that it is the immediate duty of every sinner to fly to Christ from the wrath to come. It is the express command of the Father that we hear the Son, hear him as God-man, Mediator, who hath freely paid the infinite ransom-price of redemption, and thus secured eternal happiness for all that believe in him. *Him* hath the Father anointed with all the fulness of his Spirit as his great Prophet, Priest, and King on his holy hill of Zion, and beside him there is no Saviour. He is the only Ark of refuge, and into this blessed Ark all are invited, yea, commanded to enter. Have each of you then submitted to God's authority, and closed with the Gospel call, a call addressed to all by the Lord Jesus himself? Not to comply, is to throw contempt upon God's beloved Son, and directly to fight against the Holy Spirit, than which no sin can be greater or more dangerous. O surrender yourself this day then to Christ, if you have not yet done so. If you have, you are called to prove it this day to the Church and to the world by reverently complying with his authority. He calls upon you to observe diligently all his holy ordinances. He leaves you no liberty to reject any one of his commands, and he expressly requires that you publicly testify your faith in Him, and

your deep sense of his dying love, and your solemn determination to follow Him, and to live for Him by observing His last loving, dying command, namely, by sitting down at His holy Table, on which are the lively emblems of his bleeding Sacrifice for you. Hear Him, then, saying to you, as your Lord and Master: "Do this in remembrance of Me." Take this seal of my covenant, and say by doing so that I am thy Saviour, thy Beloved, and that thou art mine, mine to serve me henceforth, yea, to suffer and to die for me if need be.

5. Lastly, believers, as Christ was engaged in solemn prayer before his transfiguration on the Mount, so follow His example. Engage in fervent prayer on the Sacramental Mount. Make it a mount of prayer, beseeching God that he would graciously give you a new glimpse of the glory of Immanuel, not only as the crucified One, but also as the risen and exalted Redeemer, and your all-prevailing Intercessor within the veil.—It is only the sight of Christ by faith that can make this Table of Communion the Table of the Lord to you, and so make this holy ordinance quickening sanctifying and comforting to you. Ask then that you may receive, seek that you may find what is freely offered, so shall you be enabled to say with the spouse; "I sat down under his shadow with great delight and his fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought me to the banqueting house and his banner over me was love." Amen.

